Pathways To a Renewable Rhythm for Your Life and Leadership

I've got a question for you. An important one. Really important.

You've heard of a BHAG, right? A Big Hairy Audacious Goal. But how about a **BHAQ**—a Big Hairy Audacious **Question**?

Here it is:

Is it possible to be more passionate, more energized, and more productive for the Kingdom…one year from now?

Read it again.

Now, just between you and me…what's your knee-jerk reaction?

When that question first landed in my world, my gut response was, *"Are you crazy?!"* If you dimmed the lights, drew the blinds, and replayed the game film of my life, you'd find plenty of seasons where simply **surviving** felt like success. And to be candid, much of the counsel I've offered leaders through the years has been about building a life that's merely **sustainable**.

Which leads me to my mea culpa: **I was wrong.**

Because here's the truth:
In God's economy, He doesn't just call us to survive.
He doesn't merely invite us to scrape together a life that works.

He invites us into a way of living that is **renewable**—a rhythm where His presence restores what life drains.

If you need a little convincing, settle in and let Jesus speak for Himself:

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to Me. Get away with Me and you'll recover your life… Learn the unforced rhythms of grace… Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

When I hear those words, something inside me stands at attention:
Yes. That's it. That's the life I long for.
A life that's free. Light. Renewable.

And by God's kindness, I'm learning to live more and more into this way of life. These days, I find myself walking with three faithful companions—three spiritual practices that are forming the framework for a renewable rhythm of life and leadership.

Let me introduce them, and then we'll unpack each one:

SABBATH – a weekly sacred space for rest, renewal, and relationship.

SOLITUDE – an intentional withdrawal from people and things to be fully present with God.

CALLING – your unique, God-given part in His grand story.

1. SABBATH — A Weekly Yes to God's Rest

Let's begin with a definition I've been refining over the years:

Sabbath is a weekly 24-hour period devoted to God for the purpose of rest, renewal, relationship, and recentering—when the "got-to's" give way to the "get-to's."

Before we unpack it, a quick observation:
In the circles I run in—leaders, pastors, ministry teams—I am finding that Sabbath is more the exception than the rule. At a recent workshop, less than half the ministry leaders in the room had any intentional pattern of Sabbath.

That's telling.
And I don't believe it's what God had in mind.

From my study of the Scriptures, I understand that Sabbath for the New Testament follower of Christ is not a command, but rather an invitation. It's a gift to be received.

For me, Sabbath has become a weekly window where I pursue whatever restores my soul—worship, reading, long walks, pockets of solitude, slow meals, unhurried time with my wife and friends. No agenda. No stopwatch. No pressure.

But here's what I'm discovering most:
Sabbath carries a **spirit**—a quiet surrender where the relentless demands of life are shelved under a simple sign: *NOT today.*

Does Sabbath occupy a reserved spot on your calendar?
If not, give it a 40 day test drive.

I'm confident that by the end, you'll begin to discover the renewable rhythm God intended for your life and leadership.

2. SOLITUDE — The Sacred Practice of Extended Conversation with God

Here's my working definition:

Solitude is the practice of being absent from people and things for an extended time so you can be fully present with God.

We live in a world of noise—unavoidable noise, self-imposed noise, distracting and soul-numbing noise. Traffic horns. Wall-mounted news feeds. Podcasts for every 15-minute gap.

And in the midst of all that, God offers a counter-formational gift: **solitude**.

One of the great discoveries of my journey is this:
In solitude, it's nearly impossible to be dishonest with God.

Extended time with Him inevitably pulls us into deep personal reflection—down to the motives, fears, and

desires we often sidestep in the blur and rush of daily life.

A picture helps:
Back in the day, when I would take the grandkids to the Los Angeles Zoo, the first thing I look for is the campus map. And the most important detail on that map? Three little words:

YOU ARE HERE.

That's exactly what happens in solitude. You locate yourself. You get your spiritual bearings. You study the game film of your heart:

Why did that moment trigger such anger?
Why did that small comment evoke such sadness?
Why do I clutch so tightly to control leadership conversations?

Solitude lifts the lid on what's under the hood.

Henri Nouwen said it beautifully:

"In solitude, I get rid of my scaffolding."

In this season, there's two questions anchoring my time with God:

"Father, what do you want to say to me…about You?

"Father, what do You want to say to me…about me?"

And then I listen.
And keep listening.

Let me make you another guarantee:
If you want to take serious strides in becoming the person God intends, solitude isn't optional. It's essential.

3. CALLING — Your God-Signed Assignment in His Grand Story

Of the three practices, this one sits closest to my heart.

I'm a student of calling. I read about it, think about it, talk about it, and—by God's grace—seek to live it. My life has been shaped more by calling than almost anything else.

Here's my favorite working definition, courtesy of Erik Rees in *SHAPE*:

"Your Kingdom Calling is far more than a career. It is a special commissioning from God to make a significant difference on this earth."

Every Christ-follower has one.

I first tasted this as a teenager reading *For This I Was Born* by Dr. Louis Talbot—pastor, Biola president, friend of my family, and a man unmistakably marked by calling. He lived convinced that his life belonged wholly to God's purposes.

To know your calling is to know your **sweet spot**—the intersection of:

1. God's PURPOSE

It's the ultimate choice not to play small ball, but to live large into God's agenda..

2. Your PASSION

What stirs you. What burdens you. What fires you up. What makes you say, *"This cannot stand."*

3. Your PROFILE

Your gifts, strengths, personality, experiences, scars, and story—everything God has woven into your life to uniquely equip you.

Your calling is where these three realities converge.
It's your God-assigned role in His Kingdom work.
And when you're living it, you feel it—joy, clarity, fulfillment, and energy.

(By the way, one of the best resources I've found for discerning calling is Tom Paterson's *Living the Life You Were Meant to Live*. Highly recommended.)

A Final Word—and One More Guarantee

Put these three practices together—**Sabbath**, **Solitude**, and **Calling**—and something remarkable happens.

You begin to live from a renewable rhythm.
Not drained. Not coasting. Not merely surviving.

But restored.
Aligned.
Energized.

So here's my final money-back guarantee:

If you embrace these three practices in the coming year, you *will* be more passionate, more energized, and more productive for the Kingdom.

And you'll discover, perhaps for the first time, that Jesus meant exactly what He said:

"Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Chuck Olson
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Lead With Your Life